

Getting Beyond the Worst Day of Your Life

Last week, a person I have become acquainted with through the theatre world in Kansas City said:

“Today represents the anniversary of the absolute worst day of my life.

The day that broke me—changed me—altered the way that I see everything.”

In one form or another, we have all had a day that is burnt into our brains **named** “the worst day of our lives”.

Some of us have more than one:

The death of a beloved one.

The end of a core purpose in life.

An illness or injury with endless, accumulating consequences.

An catastrophic split second in a war.

Losing a home.

Divorce.

Being abandoned as a minor.

A violent crime.

A betraying financial fraud with endless, accumulating consequences.

Hearing a bad diagnosis from a doctor.....

How do we travel beyond that day?

Where do we go?—within?—and without?—to remain buoyant?

Or at least not sink!

Still flailing, struggling for air!

In varying degrees of severity, every person has an experience like this—or more than one.

Your first responses are fear, anger and grief.

Which hurts, and even threaten to capsize emotional stability.

Still it is best to feel the waves of pain rather than—

Avoid!

Deny!

Or anesthetize yourself!

We may think we are controlling it by stuffing it down— drugging it over—drinking it away—or pretending it isn't there!

But that is just our little command and control center ego pretending to be in charge.

The deeper self—our soul!—is wiser & knows the trouble we are in!

But thank God that our troubles and trials don't last ALWAYS!

Why not instead choose to live **as a soul** on the worst day of your life and the days following?

You don't have a soul.

You are a soul.

So why not live—as a soul!

Aren't you more likely to find your way?

An upward way beyond the bottom you have just hit?

Let your grief and your fear and your anger school you.

Teach you a thing or two about the worst that can happen to you!

What might that be?

One of my favorite people in the world of arts and music has always been Nina Simone. I still listen to her a lot on You Tube.

Nina Simone wanted to be a classical pianist!

But in her single chance at that path, the Curtis School of Music did not accept her.

She was devastated and for the rest of her life believed racial discrimination played a part in her rejection.

Among her 40 albums, which span jazz, blues, folk, classical, pop and gospel is a song entitled “Ain’t Got No Life”.

She jumps right into her state of mind and the state of mind of many she is singing to—.....Ain’t got no home!

Ain't got no shoes!

Ain’t got no money, no skirts, no sweater, no perfume!

ain't got no friends, no schoolin,

Ain't got no ticket,

ain't got no token,

Ain’t got no man, no god!

Ain’t got no life!

What have I got? Why am I alive?

Then she flips the script! Asks—

What have I got that nobody can take away?

I Got my hair, I got my head

I Got my brains, I got my ears

Got my eyes, got my nose, got my smile

I got my tongue

Got my heart, got my soul

got my sex

got my blood

I've got life!

I've got my freedom

And I'm going to keep it.

Nina Simone's lyrics suggest that after engaging with the grief and the fear and the anger of the worst day of your life—

You begin to focus!—not on what you have lost!—but what you still have.

Not on what's missing—but what you still find within and around you!....

A couple with two children lost one of them to a disease.

They were thrown into a constant state of shock and grief.

One day, the remaining child said to his father, “Why don't you play with me anymore?”

This question from the child who was left surprised the father into action.

As long as you are still alive after the worst day of your life—and some are not—*There is saying among war veterans that all the real heroes were left on the field—*

Still if you are alive—it is important to not sit idly by.

Do something!

Say something!

Read something!

Sing something!

Care for yourself in some way that you crave being cared for.

Reach out and touch someone!

Make conscious contact with God in whatever way works for you!

Consider the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den!

Now this Bible story does not really take us inside the mind and heart of Daniel as he is being punished by a powerful king.

We are not given a glimpse of what races through Daniel's mind when some of the King's advisers persuade the king that Daniel is a dangerous rebel—and should be given the death penalty of being killed by lions.

But know for certain that that was the worst day of Daniel's life.

How did he respond?

It appears that Daniel quieted himself.

In the face of the lions, he did not move!

He remained still.

Always a good strategy in face of a dangerous animal.

There, motionless, in the lion's den we find Daniel praying, praying, praying—his trust in God—whatever may happen.

For many people who began to join the Jesus movement after Jesus was crucified, the worst day of their lives was the day the apostle Stephen was murdered by a mob!

According to the Book of Acts, *“This set off a terrific persecution of the church in Jerusalem.*

The believers were all scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Forced to leave home base, the followers of Jesus all became missionaries.

Wherever they were scattered, they preached the Message about Jesus.

When the people heard what (they) had to say, they hung on every word.

The apostles were on their way, continuing to witness and spread the Message of God's salvation, preaching in every town and village they passed through.

And what joy in the land!

A song that Nina Simone was famous for singing—Marian Anderson as well, was “If He Changed My Name”

The central lyric is “I told Jesus it would be all right if he changed my name.”

I told Jesus it would be all right if he changed my name.

Your name!

The worst that happens to us is telling us that it is time to change.

Time to BE changed!
Into living as a new soul!

Whom God has something new for you to do!

God has something new in mind for you to become!

We see the worst happening to many people today!

We also see many people being liberated by the worst.

With nothing left to lose, many more are becoming brave!

Beginning to live with joy as free souls

**All of us are doing our best
To help God
in God’s birth of God.**

**Let the worst day
Become a narrow doorway
To your life being lifted
into a new, eternal flyway!**

Let us pray:

O Soul of the Universe!

Mysterious Creative Spirit!

Loving Father!

Wise Mother!

Grant us intimacy with You!

If we are happy, make us useful.

If we are sad, comfort us.

Heal the hurt.

Let the strong make others strong.

Let the worst turn the best to the brave.

Make all the bad people good,

And if they can't be, let them lose their power.

Make all the good people nice,

And if they won't be, help us accept the inevitable.

Awaken us, God Let us find Jesus and follow him.

**Send us into the middle of what Jesus is doing in
our world today. Amen.**